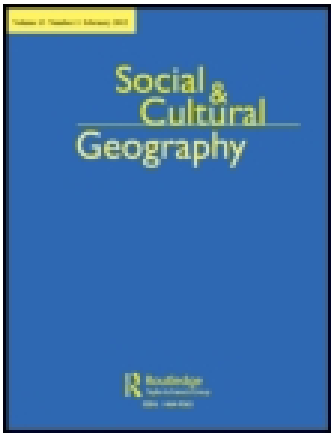

Social & Cultural Geography
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rscg20

Home sounds: experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening

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Published online: 16 May 2013.

To cite this article: Michelle Duffy & Gordon Waitt (2013) Home sounds: experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening, Social & Cultural Geography, 14:4, 466-481, DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2013.790994

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2013.790994

Social & Cultural Geography, 2013
Vol. 14, No. 4, 466–481, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2013.790994

Home sounds: experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening

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We argue that a closer attention to the everyday visceral experiences of hearing and listening offers new insights into geographies of home and practices of sustainability. We suggest that this approach is significant to understanding how sound helps to assemble and reassemble the relationships that comprise home. We concentrate on a group of 10 amenity-led migrants in their 'new coastal home' in Bermagui, New South Wales, Australia. Each participant recorded a sound diary composed of their everyday sounds. Our interpretation explores the visceral connections in the processes of making bodies feel 'at home'. First, we discuss how the rhythmic affordances of both human and non-human sounds help configure and reconfigure the spatiality and temporality of home. Second, our interpretation explores how sound is bound up with sustainability politics of homemaking. We investigate experiential practices and performativities of listening and hearing that may help constitute and reconstitute 'a' subject. This approach extends current thinking that encourages engagement with the corporeal, affective and emotional dimensions of home.

Key words: home, visceral, listening, rhythm, sound, emotion.

Introduction

Sounds are integral to place (Smith 2000). Sounds can mediate the emotional and affective relationships that comprise place, informing not only how to move and mingle but also increasing or decreasing the capacity to act. DeNora's (2000) work on music in daily life demonstrates how the affordances of sound—i.e. music's melodic structure, rhythms, tone and colour—are an important means to both spatially and temporally organise and reorganise our individual and collective lives. DeNora describes the visceral experience of sound as 'finding "the me in the music"' (2000: 68 and 69). Her embodied analysis points to the role of sound as 'a device of corporeal ordering' that operates even before birth [DeNora 2000: 77; see also Malloch (2005) and Panksepp and Bernatzky (2002) for a discussion of sonic

rhythm, communication and the psychology of anticipation and pleasure]. As argued by Duffy, Waitt, Gorman-Murray and Gibson (2010) and Waitt and Duffy (2010), it is not just the affordances of sound that makes us who we are. Rather where and how we hear and listen through the body is integral to experiential practices of making sense of self in and through the constellations of trajectories that comprise place.

Bodies have become a highly theorised topic for social and cultural geographers, particularly those studying home (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho 2009; Pink 2004). In this paper, we argue that a closer attention to the everyday visceral experiences of sound offers new insights into geographies of home. More than the representation of sound in song lyrics (Atkinson 1997; Brennan-Horley, Connell and Gibson 2007; Cohen 1995; Connell and Gibson 2003), we argue that sound is bound up with experiential, bodily and spatial practices and performativities of hearing and listening that are crucial to making sense of self and the world. Sound, hearing and listening enable spatial and temporal imperatives of homemaking. We argue that there is much to be gained from a productive dialogue between the spatialities of listening and a visceral approach to understanding place making. We suggest that sound helps heighten a sense of where the body feels 'at home', or not, that might be expressed in terms of belonging or alienation. Furthermore, we argue that the experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening are useful to better understand how the politics of sustainability dovetail with homemaking. Our visceral responses to sound provides an opportunity to better understand who and what belongs. As Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008: 462) point out, a visceral approach is 'a strategic place from which to begin to understand identity, difference and power'. Yet, although sounds are recognised as significant to (re)constituting home places (Longhurst, Johnston and Ho 2009), a fuller discussion of sound, hearing and listening is missing.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first section points to the productive avenue of research situated at the intersection of theoretical debates between home, the visceral, sound, hearing and listening. In the second section, we introduce the research location of our case study and our qualitative research methods. The third draws on a visceral approach to highlight how sounds, hearing and listening are imperative to unpacking ideas of home. First, sounds are an aid that mediates the spatial and temporal practices of homemaking by heightening affective intensities between human and non-human bodies which are then expressed in terms of belonging or non-belonging. Second, hearing and listening are crucial to the experiential practices and performativities of 'doing home'. How people hear and listen is bound up with wider social practices, including the ways we care for the self and others. As one example of performative practices, we discuss how people rework or silence particular sounds into their lives in meaningful ways as a mode of political action. Finally, we conclude that a focus on sound, hearing and listening has many possibilities within broader debates within geography.

Home, the visceral, sound, hearing and listening

Over the past decade, critical approaches to studying home have become more common. Feminist scholars have argued for unbounded rather than spatially bounded

conceptualisations of home, how homemaking practices constitute and are constituted across multiple geographical scales, as well as how home is shaped by, and reshapes, wider webs of social relationships. In this framing, home may appear rendered as a muddled concept. Yet, as feminist scholars also make clear, the notion of home continues to have ongoing ideological and emotional importance. Home continues to be constituted along normative gender roles, as something that 'ought to be' a haven from the outside world, and a place where everyone 'ought to have' a high degree of autonomy in shaping (cf. Gorman-Murray 2006). Others have begun to examine the body in relation to home, particularly through the emotional geographies associated with comfort, care and relaxation (Holloway, Jayne and Valentine 2009; Manzo 2003). Gorman-Murray and Dowling (2007: online) suggest that our ideas of what constitute home are 'typically configured through a positive sense of attachment, as a place of belonging, intimacy, security, relationship and selfhood'.

Building on this critical work, Longhurst, Johnston and Ho (2009) demonstrated how a visceral approach offers insights into the active role played by the body in the process of making sense of places as home. Drawing on the work of Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008: 462), we understand the 'visceral' to refer to 'the realm of internally-felt sensations, mood and states of being, which are born from the sensory engagement with the material world'. We contend that the bodily sensations of sound are a way of creating meanings of home that are part of wider social, cultural, economic and political systems. Paying attention to how sound prompts highly visceral experiences, therefore, offers possible insights into how sounds are worked, reworked or silenced in everyday lives in meaningful ways. Moreover, the ways people viscerally respond to everyday sounds are often embedded in questions of civic values and concerns around social responsibility. This approach is significant for, as Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy argue,

> addressing the visceral realm—and hence the catalytic potential of bodily sensations—has the potential to increase political understanding of how people can be *moved* or *mobilized* either as individuals or as groups of social actors. (2008: 469; italics in original).

Thinking about sound as a mechanism for visceral arousal means thinking about how the sensuous body is embedded in social, cultural and spatial relationships. Previous work in sociology acknowledges that the way we hear certain sounds as music is culturally mediated, and sociological studies have detailed the role of sound in triggering physiological and psychological responses (DeNora 2000; Martin 1995; see also Ansdell 2004). For example, DeNora (2000) draws attention to how sounds are often intensely visceral, resulting in bodies tingling, blushing and crying (see also Ehrenreich 2007). The work of anthropologists Keil and Feld (1994: 167) suggests that the sound of music has the ability to forge a sense of belonging through sustaining a feeling of 'being in the groove together'. Likewise, music therapist Gary Ansdell (2004: 72) took this further, arguing that the rhythmic, tonal and tactile qualities of sound allow and enable personal and social things 'to happen'. This body of work suggests that sound may intensify the forces oscillating in and between human and non-human bodies, intensely connecting bodies to particular space-times.

Important work on the ideology of music has employed a discursive and performative

lens to emphasise its intended political power (Connell and Gibson 2004; Gibson 2009; Kong 1996, 2006). Although music and sound have been intentionally used to create a sense of national and regional belonging, the way sound creates this is less clear. Over the past few years, geographers have begun to pursue this question by rethinking sound in relation to space as a process rather than representation. There are different conceptual paths to do this. Some draw on the work of Deleuze and Guatarri (1987) to focus on the ways in which sounds play a crucial role in spatial organisation, territorialisation and creating a sense of place articulated in terms of 'belonging' and 'community' (Duffy 2000, 2005; Saldanha 2002). Drawing on Bourdieu's idea of habitus, Jackson (2004) examined the ways in which bodies mingle in the clubbing scene. Others, such as Anderson (2004), explore non-representational theory to examine how feelings of utopia emerge and happen in relation to listening to recorded music at home. Adopting a visceral approach is another conceptual lens that implicitly includes our own bodies as playing an active role in making sense of sound. Our bodies are enlivened or deadened through how sound mediates the energies of flows in-between human and non-human bodies. At the core of a visceral approach is the assumption that although sounds are coded within particular ideologies, the processes of hearing and listening are embodied and, therefore, do not work to a given script or preconfigured world. Hence, a visceral approach enables us to move beyond sound as representation.

Such an approach to conceptualising sound is helpful because it facilitates rethinking sound through bodily sensations to vibrations. This also means not limiting sonorous geographies to the register of the ear alone (Rodaway 1994). Following Nancy (2007), hearing and listening are understood as quite distinctive but related practices. Nancy (2007) contends that *hearing* is the cognitive process of understanding and comprehension, whereas *listening* (the French term *écouter*) operates in bodily, emotional, physiological and psychological ways in which we seek to attribute meaning, yet we do not fully interpret such experiences (see also Simpson 2009). Yet, these are not fully distinct processes; listening and hearing operate through our bodies simultaneously, shifting between processes of interaction with sonic affordances of tempo, rhythm, colour and volume and their registering in bodily and/or cognitive modes.

A visceral approach is about bodily sensations; however, it is also about relational thinking and the processes of assembling and dissembling relationships and connections across difference into a socio-spatial formation that makes sense as a coherent whole. Home can, therefore, be understood as a serendipitous collection of things, including bodies, building, technologies, plants and landforms. Implicit to our argument is how sound mediates the dynamic, unfolding relationships between things that make sense as 'home'. Probyn (2000) draws on Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) concepts of assemblage to rethink bodies, connections and disconnections to different social aspects. In considering this, Probyn (2000) provides an example of eating:

> Eating refracts who we are. Food/body/eating assemblages reveal the ways in which identity has become elementary, and that its composite elements are always in movement. As alimentary assemblages, eating recalls with force the elemental nature of class, gender, sexuality, nation (2003, 33).

Likewise, bodies within sonorous assemblages are embedded within social identities and practices. Like food, sound connects us to uneven networks of power. Sound coheres subjectivities, places and a sense of 'togetherness'. At the same time, the same sounds may provoke a sense of alienation because they are felt and understood as disruptive or harmful and categorised then as noise.

Second, assemblage thinking opens up possibilities to consider how sound mediates the affective and emotional energies within, across and between human and non-human bodies. Again, drawing on the work of Probyn (2000), but this time her engagement with Tomkins's notion of affect, this approach helps to conceptualise bodies as open and fluid. Sedgwick and Frank (1995: 43) define this conceptualisation of the body as a dynamic network of 'incompletely overlapping central assemblies'. Significant to the ways we argue, sound works in terms of assemblage thinking is that affects are not held by a subject, but in the spaces in-between relations. Affect produces connections and disconnections between, within and across bodies which cannot be separated from the assemblages in which they are constituted. We argue that these assemblages of affect are registered by the body. A helpful way to understand how these bodily affective responses is the work of the psychologist Silvan Tomkins. Tomkins (1991: 243) suggests that affect triggers 'sets of muscle and glandular responses located in the face and also widely distributed through the body, which generate sensory feedback which is either inherently "acceptable" or "unacceptable"'. These bodily affective responses are unconscious, causing a flood of chemicals through the body, triggering muscles, blood vessels and sweat glands. Considering the affective qualities of sound, Saldanha (2002: 58) argues that 'music is the cultural form best suited to extract the energies already oscillating in and in-between human bodies'. Extending this argument from music to sound more generally, our interest lies in this way that sound may intensely connect or disconnect bodies within a constellation of trajectories or assemblage that makes sense as home. Therefore, our lived experiences of home are in part constituted out of these affective responses to the interconnected processes of both listening and hearing. Affects can disappear in seconds, but can also stick to people, places and objects for years and hence inform various relationships. The connection between sound, hearing, listening and affects, we argue, is one mechanism that enables people to invest in, or distances themselves from, home (Sigmon, Whitcomb and Snyder 2002).

Hearing and listening to Bermagui

Bermagui is a coastal town of around 2,000 people, located in the Bega Valley about 400 km south of Sydney, Australia. The Yuin people are the traditional custodians. The town is nestled within land now valued, managed and protected for its ecology: to the south is the Mimosa Rocks National Park, to the west is Bermagui Nature Reserve and to the north is Wallaga Lake National Park. The tourism industry circulates representations of Bermagui that are embedded in the European notion of the rural idyll. In our exploration, we consider the affective dimensions of sound for amenity migrants to make bodily sense of Bermagui as 'home'. People engage in the processes of hearing and listening as a way of creating and maintaining relationships

between self and the world. How people consciously and unconsciously absorb sounds is therefore conceived as part of a broader, everyday, relational socio-spatial practice, including that of homemaking—for instance, being a 'good neighbour', or 'good parent' or 'environmentally responsible citizen'. Hearing and listening practices are therefore very much embedded in a wide range of values and politics.

What we uncovered during our fieldwork, particularly in our conversations with people, was that alongside an understanding of Bermagui as a rural idyll, homemaking practices in Bermagui are embedded in questions and concerns around forestry, fishery, drought, climate change and Indigenous sovereignty. These concerns cut across and against one another with effects of conflict. The first concern is Bermagui as the home of Aboriginal people of the Yuin Nation (Rose 1996). The broader context for this concern is an increased focus within Australian mainstream politics on the impacts of European colonisation through the process of reconciliation and reparation. Alongside the rise of the rights of Indigenous Australians, a second concern is the over-consumption of capitalism and corporate practices, particularly targeting fishing and logging. Since colonisation, Bermagui has been home to European families who became embedded in place through their labour as farmers, loggers and fishers (Waitt and Hartig 2000). More recent philosophical shifts in the past four decades have spurred a range of organised 'environmental' campaigns amongst various community organisations. In the 1980s, the critical consciousness and action around more sustainable, non-capitalist ways of living was central to those who migrated to Bermagui and positioned themselves as counter to mainstream politics as alternative, bohemians or hippies. In the 2000s, the recent global success and impact of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), alongside the community-oriented Clean Energy for Eternity (CEFE) that started in Bermagui in 2006, have helped mobilise issues of consumerism and environmental responsibility to a wider audience. In Bermagui, the mobilisation of green issues into mainstream politics occurred against a backdrop of the process of amenity-led migration, whereby mostly middle-class families uprooted their suburban lives in the interest of both downsizing and the slower pace of living seemingly offered by a lifestyle-orientated back to nature. Making more environmentally informed choices became positioned as a way to connect residents of Bermagui to family, to community and to place. Each of these broader concerns therefore helped constitute slightly differing home assemblages for those involved in this research, as one or other concerns were accorded significance in our participants' daily lives.

Our research originated from a community consultation. The aim of this consultation was for residents to raise questions and concerns that cultural scholars may help address. At this meeting, residents wanted to know more about the way sound operated in their everyday lives. Although there is a growing body of geographical literature that explores how sound mediates the relationship between self and space through practices of hearing and listening (Fraser 2009; Smith 2000; Wood and Smith 2004), this literature offers little advice when it comes to methods (Wood, Duffy and Smith 2007). An experimental method was, therefore, designed; what we termed a 'sound diary' (refer also to Duffy and Waitt 2011; Waitt and Duffy 2010; Wood, Duffy and Smith 2007). This method is based on solicited

diary methodologies, but it is the one that asks participants to explore the more intuitive and affective aspects of our social lives through audio recording.

Very simply, participants were asked to record everyday sounds. Then, follow-up conversations allowed participants to talk about these sounds. Our contention is that hearing and listening to the playback, however mundane, offered a means to explore the affective intensities and emotional responses of sounds. Sounds happen across a range of performativities and are embedded within a diversity of representations. In any one fleeting moment, sounds that resonate with our own sense of self have the capacity to re-assemble the serendipity of things called home. Shifting the participants' focus to sound enables us to explore the various assemblages out of which such individual subjectivities and home places are forged. The use of sound diaries may help capture the ways in which our non-cognitive, bodily *and* cognitive responses establish sets of coherence, no matter how short lived or fragile, that goes into comprising home assemblages. Alongside recording what was said in follow-up conversations, the use of sound diaries also required careful attention to bodily gestures as a means to access affective registers of response.

In addition, we collected our own sound diaries prior to meeting with participants. These recordings made us aware of how this practice sets in motion various performativities, memories of elsewhere and ways to image one's place in the world (Thibaud 2009). This additional approach facilitated an engagement with our participants—we too had heard and listened albeit with our own emerging connections and disconnections—and this then helped us to share with participants our own reflections and responses to Bermagui.

Invitation to participate was circulated through an article in a community newsletter, *The Triangle*, and the mainstream press, *The Bega District News*. The seven women and three men who accepted our invitation could be categorised as amenity-led migrants, in that they have recently chosen to move to Bermagui to enjoy the ocean, forest and slower pace of life. They were aged from their 20s through to their 60s, had tertiary education degrees, had travelled extensively overseas and were either semi-retired or continued to work in mainstream employment. None were employed in agriculture, forestry or fishing industries. As recent arrivals familiar with research, these people were perhaps predisposed to consider how they might belong and so interested in thinking about the processes of homemaking. Our aim is not to make authoritative statements about how sound makes Bermagui feel like home to amenity-led migrants. Instead, our aim is to provide a more sympathetic account of the capacity of individuals to use the affordances of sounds in helping making sense of self and reassembling connections to place.

Our analysis involved first, playing back the sound diaries with the participant and talking about what was recorded. The transcribed conversations were read and reread a number of times, paying attention to how sounds provoked a biological response. Attention was also given to how the affective qualities of sound were communicated in textual imagery. Alongside this, we noted bodily reactions communicated at the non-verbal level, i.e. the intonations, the emphases and the pauses in our participants' conversations. This approach enabled us to study and think on each recording and concurrent description of the exuberance and/or despair—even at times the banality—of being-in-the moment of a sound. An important aspect of the playback of the sound diaries and conversation with the participants was that

these retrospective viewpoints offered possibilities to articulate more measured, self-reflexive accounts about sounds and emotive experiences. Summaries were then written for each individual interview to give a sense of the whole as well as the emergent themes, emotions and affects. Hence, the significance of the experience of sounds could be understood in relation to other participants, highlighting similarities and individual differences.

Affordances of sound

The character of space as home is constantly in the making through the ways in which familiar sounds mediate the relational interactions amongst human and non-human bodies. Sounds that enabled our participants to assemble and reassemble Bermagui as home emerged in the participants' sound diaries within the familiar pulse, beat and continuity of cyclical rhythm of such elements as the pounding of the surf driven by the change in tides, frogs heralding rain and the dawn chorus coded within the ideology of the rural idyll. The attentiveness of our participants to the affordances of such rhythms is important to better understand how they make sense of Bermagui as home. From this focus, we noted two broad themes arising out of the material collected: first, the spatial and temporal experiences of Bermagui as home are articulated or structured through sound; second, the politics of sustainability which on the whole expressed aliveness and an enhanced connection to place through hearing and listening. Within this second broad theme, we also found a related concern located within discourses of morality that sought to define what is 'native' or 'belongs' in the space of Bermagui.

I: The spatial and temporal experiences of home

Perhaps unsurprising given its location, the rhythm of the surf emerged as one of the sounds that enhanced and detracted from the definition of Bermagui as home. Hearing and listening to the tempo of the surf provided, we argue, important aural clues to the ways in which places can be made familiar, enabling a sense of belonging or non-belonging at quite a visceral level. Participants talked about the ways in which the volume, tempo and duration of breaking waves factored into where they lived in Bermagui. For example, Christopher, a retired public servant, had moved to Bermagui from Canberra approximately 6 years earlier. The volume, tempo and duration of breaking waves played a key role in the organising and making sense of Bermagui, as he explained,

> Another thing that's different here, and characteristic of Bermi—and a lot of coastal towns along here—is the sound of the surf. And there are different sounds here of surf in Bermagui. The sound of the surf, a rather more gentle surf, you hear around here at what's called the headlands area. And there's the sound of the surf when there's a swell coming from north—at Beares Beach—where it crashes on the rocks and makes a very, very loud sound. And you wouldn't want to live—for me anyway—near anywhere sort of near Beares Beach down there. Even though they have some very expensive sort of properties down there. Because, if the surf's, if the swell's coming in a particular direction, they're very, very loud crashes as it hits great big rocks and that sort of thing down there you know. (conversation, February 2008)

Christopher's comments reveal how the sound of the ocean is not merely textual, overwritten

by cultural resonances, but is felt at a visceral level. The volume, tempo and rhythm of the surf operate as a mechanism of creating some sense of temporal and spatial order and orientation, and so an individual's sense of home. In this description of the surf, Christopher's sonic knowledge helps him make sense of his relationship with Bermagui. As he explains, the sensory stimulation of the surf at Beares Beach seems to have attracted expensive real-estate development. However, for Christopher, the very loud sounds generated by the ocean work against Beares Beach becoming home. As Hayes-Conroy and Hayes Conroy (2008: 469) argue, people have 'bodily ways-of-judging'. In Christopher's description, how sound works through bodily sensations is a vital part of the potentialities and tensions around the spatialities of homemaking. In these terms, Probyn's (2000) work points to the ways in which people create home places at a gut level. How the subject comes to hear and listen for home is a set of ongoing performative tasks that, in the example of Christopher, are linked to ideas such as class and sensory pleasures provided by beach sounds.

Other conversations around the surf emphasised the listening pleasures aroused by the rhythmic affordances of beach sounds. For example, Stella also recorded sounds of the surf, saying that

> it's a very gentle environment and it is very nourishing and I don't get any of the nourishing unless I'm in it … And I didn't really understand *being* in nature before. (conversation, February 2008)

Stella migrated from Canberra a decade earlier. A married professional who works from home, she lives on a property some 20 km from Bermagui's town centre. She is a central person in many of Bermagui's community networks, including those championing the arts and sustainability. In this quote, she describes beach sounds as 'gentle' and 'nourishing', and such descriptions highlight the importance of sound as vital part of homemaking in allowing an intimate relationship with the ocean which enables her to call Bermagui as home. Stella infers how the sounds penetrate her body, connecting her viscerally with the ocean as a source of nourishment. She went on to further describe how the rhythmic affordances of the waves create a place where her body 'feels at home':

> when we lived on the farm [in Queensland] which I didn't identify with as much, I struggled with calling it home even though it was beautiful—and then when we moved here then I realised what a water person I am. And I think it's the rhythm of that, you know. Because I probably listen to music less now at home and let that sound [the rhythm of the waves] being the background. 'Cos its' got its own pull about it. And its own sort of life force. (conversation, Stella, February 2008)

This excerpt from Stella's conversation again highlights the ways in which home is not merely textual but also felt and created in and through the body. She understood her farm in Queensland as 'beautiful' but 'struggled with calling it home'. She also illustrates how the sonic rhythm of the ocean engaged her senses that then brought a social ordering over place. Moreover, it is the rhythm of the ocean that Stella especially focuses on as a means to configure Bermagui as home. As she went on to explain, she is less reliant upon the experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening *to music* as a way of maintaining home. In her new home, music disturbs the affective relations that emanate from the sounds of waves, or in her words the 'life force'. Her ideal mode of being at home in

Bermagui now entailed remaining alert to, as well as acceding to, the rhythm of the ocean. As she goes onto say, while listening to her recording,

> It [the rhythm of the ocean] does have a pull about it. And it has a—one of the things I'm trying to do is get off the computer and get outside. And the water, that pull of the water helps you to want to do things. It does have a pull about it. (conversation, February 2008)

Here Stella illustrates the capacity of the body to absorb, and be affected by, the sonic rhythms of the waves. For Stella, these affective responses help her to find ways that lead to a fulfilling life in Bermagui. More generally, Stella demonstrates the abstract sense in which affect involves a 'sense of push in the world' (Thrift 2004: 64). How the body senses the rhythmic push of the ocean may increase the capacity of bodies to do things through how it makes and remakes connections between ideas, things, people, plants and animals.

There is also a corporeal attentiveness to the temporal aspect of home. The ocean again was one important factor mediating the flux of experiences used to make sense of time in Bermagui. For example, a retired married couple originally from the UK, Beth and Will, illustrate that time is not simply chronological but lived and experienced through hearing and listening to the surf and tide:

> Beth: Usually in the morning, if you get the turn of the tide right, you can hear the waves and the turn of the tide. 'Cos that's the only time the sea's ever noisy. What we call noisy, 'cos that's the only time you ever hear the sea.
>
> Will: Not without when we've got a big sea running. But—
>
> Beth: —and they usually hear folks—don't you—
>
> Will: —yep
>
> Beth: —start up, the motor's slow, then you hear them actually hit the mouth of the entrance there, and can—
>
> Will: pop!pop!pop!pop!pop! [He here imitates the sound of the boat engine starting up]. (conversation, March 2008)

Their house is located at a short distance from the beach. They only hear the ocean currents and surf through a heightened volume that occurs with a particular combination of tide, atmospheric pressure and wind. The moments they become aware of this sonic intrusion, the sound of the surf becomes a noise. Yet, the changing embodied temporal rhythms of the ocean are also an important mechanism for Beth and Will to cultivate a connection of familiarity with local fishers—the 'pop! pop! pop!' of those heading out in boats at first light or on their return later in the day. In this way, ocean sounds are reworked to help to make and remake the temporal dimensions of homelife through the familiar continuity of hearing the turn of the tides and cementing a connection with the local fishing boats.

Respondents describe their home places not simply in terms of the sounds of the surf, but also in the values and attributes accorded the affordances of sonic rhythms. Home is partly constituted through the ways in which participants weave together those aspects of their home places' daily sonic rhythms. The rhythmic pulse of the surf may seem mundane, but this everyday sound and others, such as bird calls or traffic, in fact, are the immateriality of place, which 'something' that gives 'expressive life and liveliness independent of the human subject (Latham and McCormack

2004: 703). The affordances accorded these surf rhythms mediate the spatial and temporal relationships between human and non-human bodies through which these participants interpellate themselves and Bermagui that then creates the assemblage of home.

II. Sound and the politics of sustainability

The participants' sound diaries and conversations also revealed the interweaving of the experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening with a politics of sustainability. Sound became felt within the ebb and flow of the constellation of practices and performativities that sustain a particular version of self and everyday home life. In this section, we focus on how the rhythmic affordances of sound, in an affective and material sense, provide insights as to how participants are positioned with a particular politics of sustainability.

One such example was of the sound of raindrops, a sound that had been scarce prior to our fieldwork due to drought conditions. Participants talked about how raindrops help to make living in Bermagui more materially 'comfortable', as Christopher explains,

> the rain, if you like, a more recent sort of phenomenon, like just a lot of rain has just sort of happened, you know. I happen to have a tin roof, which is rather good—it's a bit of a cliché I suppose. That's pretty nice, you know, the rain on the roof. (conversation, February 2008)

For Christopher, who has access to town water, the sounds of raindrops resonate with Blunt and Dowling's (2006) theorisation of the emotional and embodied experience of home; in this instance, the raindrops' role is as generator of tranquillity and peace. Moreover, the sound of these raindrops is bound up with the emotional security usually associated with notions of home. Other respondents talked about the sound of rain to amplify the impacts of their own individual and collective experience of drought. Sounds of the raindrops, regardless of the intensity, were described as emotionally comforting, as this quote from Penelope suggests,

> Because Barraga Bay is not connected to a town water supply, we rely on the rain for our household water. The sound of the rain—whether gentle or torrential—falling on our tin roof and running through the downpipes gives me a sense of comfort and peace. As an added benefit, our water supply is being replenished. If it is raining at bedtime, it's another wonderful way to fall asleep. (conversation, February 2008)

Penelope is a married professional who has lived in Barraga Bay, some 9 km outside of Bermagui, for approximately 8 years. As a mother and homemaker not connected to a mains water supply, she is vigilant against thoughtless use of water. As she reveals in this conversation, without town water, the rhythms of raindrops are regarded as a necessity in order to sustain feelings of comfort and peace. Sounds of raindrops here play an integral role in appreciating amenity-led migrants' understanding of rain. After a prolonged period of drought, Penelope's rhythmic attunement to rain is one that enables her body to relax. As Edensor (2010: 7) points out, non-human rhythms are not simply a 'passive backdrop upon which human activity unfolds', instead it is the polyrhythms of place that enfold us within the daily pulses and connect us in instinctive ways. We hear this in these conversations with our participants around rain who demonstrate

how they locate themselves through the experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening, i.e. the shifting between bodily, visceral affective and cognitive processes of being-in-the-world. These visceral experiences of rain tell us how these individuals understand themselves as connected within and to the sonic rhythms of places they value as home. A visceral approach illustrates how bodily sensations have the potential to improve the political decision-making around water sustainability. Taking a visceral approach illustrates how the sound of rain and home is intimately connected.

The second theme around a politics of sustainability that emerged from our empirical findings relates to the ways in which sounds, hearing and listening are active constituents in the ways participants discursively construct particular moral positions in regard to the presence of animals and technologies at a visceral level. Sound dairies revealed which elements of the non-human world embody certain positions of 'rightness' and those that do not. Such a sound element was the distinctive high-pitched 'ping' of bellbirds that featured strongly in nearly all sound diaries. For example, Dawn, aged in her late 1950s, had moved to Bermagui from Adelaide as part of the counter-culture movement in the 1970s. She talked passionately about how the sound made by the bellbirds is felt and created as noise:

> I can't stand the noise of bellbirds. They are exotics you know. That constant pinging is maddening. And, it is a constant reminder they are killing the native bush. See that tree. There is a whole colony living in that tree. They are slowly killing that tree. Once it is dead, they will move onto another one. … There's a whole number of strategies in town on how to kill them [bellbirds]. (conversation, February 2011)

For her, the presence of bellbirds in Bermagui is regrettable. In Dawn's framing of home and nature, the bellbirds bring only noise and death. To care for Bermagui as home, and promote the quiet of that specific place, requires mobilising ideas of exoticism to render the bellbird as a pest. Bellbird sounds are crucial to enlivening the discourses of nativeness, ecology and environmental sustainability that constitute the bellbird in terms of pollution and impurity in Bermagui. What is important is that Dawn is negatively affected by the continuity of their 'pinging' sound, what she termed 'maddening'. In turn, she then affects others to become aware of the constant 'pinging' of bellbirds as noise, and actively involved in creating 'silence' as a means of protection. Hearing and listening to the sound of bellbirds is one way that Dawn can share narratives of nativeness—belonging—and build relationships with townspeople at a visceral level. In this way, the practice and performativities associated with silencing and killing bellbirds are justified. Such description highlights the importance of sound, hearing and listening as a vital part of a sustainability politics working at the visceral level. In this case, the sound of these birds becomes a mixture of agitation and activity that is crucial to the dovetailing of a local with an environmental subject.

Dawn is an integral part of a 'connective aesthetic', i.e. as Roe (2006: 478) argues,

> the process of meaning making is political and ethical because the action that is played out from this process is relationally embedded in the environment in which the action is played out; thus the process of meaning making is not reflexive but evolves through affective and material connectivity.

Dawn was not alone in demonstrating how sounds, hearing and listening enliven a particular politics of sustainability. For Stella, it was how the hum of the fridge became felt as out of sync within her set of practices and performativities that sustain her version of self and everyday home life. Describing the hum of the fridge in her sound diary, she said, 'the fridge is big and clumsy and it takes too much power and it annoys me' (conversation, February 2008). Stella had recently learnt more about changing climates through a grassroots movement, CEFE. The hum of the fridge that appeared in her sound diary connected her to the politics of climate change at a visceral level. In the moment of recording the fridge, she felt the challenges and responsibilities of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. How her body absorbed the hum of the fridge in her home acted as a constant reminder of her household's carbon footprint, as well as of the connections between electricity and climate change. The hum of the fridge presented a household dilemma both undermining and sustaining the home-making practices and performativities made possible by the cooling, freezing, ordering and storage of food (Shove 2003).

Conclusion

Studying sound, hearing and listening have much to contribute to the geographical work of home. We have argued that sound is a productive avenue to investigate the emotional and affective dimensions because of how it evokes strong visceral responses. Sound is integral to how people 'make' home. Through listening and hearing, people build relationships at a visceral level. Sounds help people create visceral connections, or disconnections, between people, things and place. We suggest that hearing and listening practices and performativities are significant to a better understanding of how people maintain and establish particular dimensions of their subjectivities within the social and material relationships that comprise home.

This research has taught us the importance of sonic rhythms in establishing and making home spaces. The rhythmic quality of sounds helps organise everyday routines through which places are lived and felt. These results confirm Attali's argument 'that rhythms and sounds are the supreme mode of relation between bodies once the screens of the symbolic, usage and exchange are shattered' (Attali 1992: 143). Likewise, as Edensor (2010, drawing on Herzfeld 1997) argues, in our everyday lives, we share the habits of rhythm and these become the basis for a wider sense of belonging. Thus, sonic rhythms are integral to a sensuous production of place, one that may point to bodies and place in terms of repetition, the mundane and reciprocity. Yet, even as the rhythmic affordances of sound enable places to be felt and called home or not, this need not mean that change and variability are prevented. Rather, the oscillations between listening and hearing the rhythmic affordance of a sound are very much part of an ongoing, heterogeneous, dynamic and *in-the-moment* set of responses. As Back (2003) argues, we need to take notice of such seemingly small details as they can tell us much about the larger social forces operating within the everyday life.

Through the practices and performativities of hearing and listening to everyday sound, participants provided a grounded and embodied sense of themselves and their cultural specificity. Tracing sounds is always contingent on how an individual is placed within the multiple assemblages that comprise place. Working with amenity-led migrants from metropolitan centres, the regular and

repetitive sounds of the surf, rain and bird calls were important to making sense of themselves and Bermagui as home. Furthermore, the experiential practices and performativities of hearing and listening may seem mundane, but they provide insights into how people engage viscerally with the politics of sustainability. We have argued that hearing and listening practices and performativities may help orient ourselves within sounds, and consequently what comes to feel 'in place' is more than the physiological responses of our bodies. We have illustrated how the sounds of rain, bird calls, boat engines and the hum of fridges trigger affective responses that have important implications for how individuals engage with sustainable politics. We suggest that understanding more about how sustainability politics are fashioned at a visceral level is a productive line of future enquiry.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank those who participated in this research and gave so generously their time and themselves.

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Abstract translations

Des sons de chez soi: Des pratiques expérientiels et des performativités de l'ouïe et de l'écoute

Nous affirmons qu'une attention plus étroite prêtée aux expériences viscérales quotidiennes de l'ouïe et de l'écoute fournit de nouveaux aperçus dans les géographies de la maison et des pratiques de la durabilité. Nous suggérons que cette approche soit importante pour comprendre comment le son aide à assembler et à rassembler les rapports dont la maison se compose. Nous concentrons sur un groupe de 10 personnes qui se sont déménagées pour des raisons récréatives à une «ºnouvelle résidence secondaire sur la côteº» à Bermagui, Nouvelles-Galle du Sud, Australie. Chaque participant a enregistré un journal intime sonore de leurs sons quotidiens. Notre interprétation examine les liens viscéraux dans les processus de faire les corps se sentir «ºchez euxº». D'abord nous discutons comment les éléments rythmiques des sons humains et non-humains aident à configurer et reconfigurer la spatialité et la temporalité de la maison. Ensuite, notre interprétation examine comment le son se lie à la politique du ménage durable. Nous interrogeons des pratiques expérientiels et des performativités de l'entendre et de l'écouter qui puissent aider à constituer et reconstituer «ºunº» sujet. Cette approche prolonge de la pensée actuelle qui encourage un engagement avec les dimensions corporelles, affectives, et émotionnelles de la maison.

Mots-clefs: Maison, viscéral, entendre, rythme, son, émotion, affect, durabilité.

Los sonidos del hogar: las prácticas de la experiencia y las performatividades del oír y del escuchar

En este artículo sostenemos que oír y escuchar son experiencias viscerales cotidianas que ofrecen nuevas perspectivas sobre las geografías del hogar y las prácticas de la sostenibilidad. Sugerimos que esta aproximación resulta relevante a los fines de entender cómo los sonidos contribuyen a ensamblar y reensamblar las relaciones que constituyen al hogar. Para ello concentramos nuestra atención en un grupo de 10 migrantes-de-amenidad en sus 'nuevas casa en la costa' en Bermagui, Nueva Gales del Sur, Australia. Cada uno de los participantes creó un diario de sonidos constituido por la grabación de sus sonidos cotidianos. Nuestra interpretación explora las conexiones viscerales que se constituyen en el proceso que hace que los cuerpos se sientan 'en casa'. En primer lugar, analizamos cómo la adecuación rítmica de los sonidos humanos y no-humanos ayuda a configurar y reconfigurar la espacialidad y temporalidad del hogar. En segundo lugar nuestra interpretación explora cómo el sonido está ligado a la sostenibilidad de las políticas de domesticidad. Investigamos las prácticas de la experiencia y las performatividades del oír y del escuchar que ayudan a configurar y reconfigurar 'al' sujeto. Este tipo de aproximación amplia el alcance del pensamiento actual que incentiva el compromiso con lo corporal, lo afectivo y las dimensiones emocionales del hogar.

Palabras claves: hogar, visceral, escuchar, ritmo, sonido, emoción, afecto, sostenibilidad.